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ABSTRACT

In February 1996, Gainesville College, in Georgia, conducted a study of students in its Legal Assistant Management (LAM) Program to determine retention rates, numbers of graduates, and course pass rates. Retention and graduation rates were calculated for 175 students who enrolled in at least one LAM course from spring 1991 to fall 1995. In addition, the course-taking behavior was analyzed of 154 students who had passed at least one LAM course since spring 1991. Study findings included the following: (1) the overall retention rate for students who started the LAM sequence in the spring of 1993 was 78%; (2) of the 116 students who took at least one LAM course from spring 1991 to winter 1994, 24% (n=28) had received an Associate Degree in LAM as of fall 1995; (3) 50 of the 105 students who took at least 1 LAM course and who passed it with a "D" or better between spring 1991 and winter 1994 went on to complete the LAM course series with a "D" average or better by fall 1995; and (4) excluding the 16% of students who started the series between spring 1991 and winter 1994 and dropped out of the series by fall 1995, 65% of the students completed the sequence within 8 or more quarters as of fall 1995. The survey instrument and responses to open-ended questions are attached. (HAA)

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Retention Rates, Graduates, and LAM-Series Completers for the Legal Assistant Management Program

Dr. Hamilton, OPIR, Gainesville College

February 1996

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Retention Rates, Graduates, and LAM-Series Completers
Legal Assistant Program

HIGHLIGHTS

- From the spring of 1991 to the fall of 1995, 175 unduplicated students enrolled in one or more LAM courses at Gainesville College.

- The most recent retention rate for students who started the LAM sequence in the spring of 1993 was 78 percent. This compares favorably with the College's retention rates for first-time full-time students which over the past several years ranged from 70 to 78 percent (retention rates between the two groups are not directly comparable in that the cohort definition are different).

- Of the 116 students who took at least one LAM course at Gainesville College from the spring of 1991 through to the winter of 1994, twenty-eight (or 24%) received an Associate of Applied Science degree in LAM as of the fall of 1995. Another student who received LAM credit for passing the CLA examination also earned a LAM degree from the College.

- Fifty of the 105 (48%) students who took at least one LAM course at Gainesville College and passed it with a 'D' or better between the spring of 1991 and the winter of 1994 went on to complete the series of LAM courses with a 'D' or better by the fall of 1995.

- Twenty-eight of the 50 (56%) students who completed the LAM sequence of courses at Gainesville College between the spring of 1991 and the winter of 1994 earned an Associate of Applied Science in LAM from the College by the fall of 1995. If one excludes the 25 students who stopped out after completing only one or two LAM courses, then the percentage of those who complete the sequence within eight or more quarters as of the fall of 1995 increases to 65 percent. It is highly likely that at least some, if not all, of the 22 series-completers without LAM degrees (50-28) are finishing the 60 hours of general education credits necessary for the A.A.S. An additional five students completed 8 or 9 LAM courses. One can speculate that they and other non-completers will eventually complete the series. Clearly, the data suggest that the majority of students who commit to the program progress towards the associate degree.

Retention Rates, Graduates, and LAM-Series Completers for the Legal Assistant Management Program

Dr. Hamilton, OPIR, Gainesville College
February 1996

Legal Assistant Management Program

The Legal Assistant Management (LAM) program, which began in the spring of 1991, is an option within the Business Division that leads to an Associate of Applied Science degree after a student takes a selection of core curriculum courses and a required set of legal assistant courses. It serves the growing public need for legal services in both civil, and criminal matters. The series of LAM courses canvases a wide range of legal-environment issues such as litigation, the execution of wills, real estate transactions, divorce and child custody, bankruptcy, and corporate law. The series always begins in the spring quarter of alternating odd years and runs for six or eight quarters (eight quarters as of the spring of 1995) through the summer of the next year or second winter (Spring 1991 to Summer 1992, Spring 1993 to Summer 1994, Spring 1995 to Winter 1997, etc.). One or two LAM courses are offered each quarter with the exception of fall and winter quarters in alternating years (e.g. no LAM courses offered during F92/W93 and F94/W95).

With one exception, the LAM courses do not have prerequisites and can be taken in any order. Therefore, students can begin taking LAM courses during almost any quarter. As of the summer of 1994, students must complete a 12-course LAM series (a new course has been added to the curriculum and will be offered for the first time during the summer of 1996) whereas only 11 LAM courses were required prior to that. A policy is in place that will soon require that individuals must graduate from a LAM program in order to secure eligibility to sit for the National CLA examination held annually in Atlanta.

Organization of the Study (3-Parts)

PART I: The first part of the study calculates one-year retention rates for the 175 students who enrolled in at least one LAM course at Gainesville College since the spring of 1991 (Tables 1 and 3).

PART II: The second part deals with the number of students who have taken at least one LAM course at the College and graduated from the program with a LAM degree (Tables 2 and 4).

PART III: The third narrows the cohort of 175 students to 154 and looks at the number of LAM courses students pass at the College with a 'D' or better. A grade of 'D' is all that is necessary to satisfy the degree requirements for any and all LAM courses (Table 5).

PART I

ONE-YEAR RETENTION

Retention

Retention studies must define a group of students to follow over a specified time frame. There is considerable variation in the way students within a given program such as LAM advance towards (or retreat from) their degree. For example, retention rates are impacted by part-time enrollment and remedial students who might declare LAM as their major but never exit developmental studies. Others exhibit a stop-in and stop-out pattern of attendance: they may attend one quarter then stop out for awhile, perhaps years. Some students find the curriculum too difficult and drop out, while others might want special expertise in only one or several of the areas presented by a program but have no intention of completing the entire curriculum. Then too, some students simply lose interest over time or move out of the area. Younger students often enter programs without a good notion of its content or academic expectations. After sampling a course or two to determine their interest, they switch to another pursuit. All of these nuances and more must be taken into account when developing a cohort of study for a retention analysis. Without at least some survey data, it is almost impossible to get a handle on all the dynamic variables that influence retention.

Cohort

An electronic search of the College database culled 175 students who enrolled in at least one LAM course at Gainesville College, regardless of the grade received, from the spring of 1991 to the fall of 1995.[1] A basic assumption of the study is that a student who enrolls in at least one LAM courses, regardless of self-declared major or the grade they receive, can be considered a LAM major who intends to complete the sequence. Twenty-one of the 175 students in this part of the study never passed even one LAM course with a 'D' or better (i.e. they received grades of 'W', 'F', or 'WF').

This is a fairly generous assumption, since some students may only be interested in one or two courses to increase their expertise or they may be sampling the curriculum and decide to abandon it with no real ambition to complete it the sequence. Some students lose the ability to continue in a program for a whole host of reasons unrelated to the program itself (e.g. move to another area, change jobs or work hours, financial difficulty, sickness). No attempt was made to restrict the study group to self-declared LAM majors. As a result it should be noted that forty of the 175 students (23%) had self-declared majors other than LAM. Moreover, the LAM major designation (220103, n=117 in this study) did not begin as a separate code until the summer of 1994. Prior to that time LAM students were given a more general major code for Business Management (n=18 in this study).

Enrollments for the 175 unduplicated students are shown on a quarter-by-quarter basis from the quarter in which they enrolled in their first LAM course through to the end of the fall of 1995. Students within a row who earned an associate degree in LAM at Gainesville College are shown parenthetically (Table 1).

Retention Rates

The base quarter for determining program-specific retention rates for the cohort was the quarter in which they enrolled in their first LAM course at Gainesville College (transfer LAM

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[1]One hundred and seventy eight students in the database had LAM credits, but three of the 178 had earned all their LAM credits by transfer or examination. Since none of the three took a LAM course at the College they were excluded from the study.

credits and audits for LAM courses were not used to determine the first quarter). For example, a student in the cohort who took several core curriculum courses over a several quarter period (e.g. Fall 1992 and Winter 1993) before enrolling in their first LAM course (e.g. Spring 1993) would be followed from the quarter in which they first enrolled in the LAM course (Spring of 1993) through to the fall of 1995. Some students change to a LAM major after taking courses at the College, while others take a number of core curriculum courses before starting the LAM sequence. As is evident, the timing of the first LAM course does not necessarily coincide with a student's first quarter at the College.

Although students can enter the LAM program at various times within a given six-quarter or eight-quarter cycle of LAM courses, the largest numbers of students begin in the spring of odd years (Spring Quarters of 1991, 1993, 1995) and stay with the series of courses for varying lengths of time. One-year retention rates were calculated for students entering the program from the spring of 1991 to the summer of 1994 (Table 3). One-year retention rates for the program are calculated as follows: All students within the cohort defined above who enrolled in their first LAM course during a given quarter (denominator) are divided into the number of the same set of students who are still enrolled one year (or four quarters) later.

$$\frac{\textit{Enrolled One Year Later}}{\textit{Enrolled in First LAM Course during Given Quarter}} * 100 = \textit{First-Year Retention Rate}$$

Findings: One-Year Retention Rates

One-year retention rates vary considerably from one group to another and are not especially meaningful when following fewer than ten students. If one considers only the groups entering during the spring quarters of 1991 and 1993 then the one-year retention rates are 38.7 percent and 77.8 percent respectively. The overall one-year rate for the 132 students who enrolled in the program from the spring of 1991 to the summer of 1994 was 49.2 percent (Table 3). By comparison, retention rates for the College as a whole for first-time full-time students range from 70 to 78 percent. These college rates are benchmarks but not easily comparable to the LAM students.

PART II

Number of Graduates with Associate Degree in LAM

Cohort (same as in Part I)

One hundred and seventy-five students who enrolled in at least one LAM course at Gainesville College, regardless of the grade received, from the spring of 1991 to the fall of 1995.

Findings: Total Number of LAM Graduates as of Fall 1995

Degree tallies are given in two ways: (1) by the quarter in which the student took their first LAM course (syq), and (2) by the quarter in which the LAM degree was earned (dyq). For example, 5 of the 31 students who took their first LAM course during the spring of 1991 had earned a LAM degree by the fall of 1995 (syq row), whereas five students earned the LAM degree during the summer of 1994 (dyq row). Twenty eight of the 175 students in the cohort received an Associate of Applied Science in LAM over the study period (Table 2).

As noted with an asterisk in the degree totals in Table 2, one student who earned a LAM degree from the College did so by passing the CLA examination, then afterwards receiving 25 LAM credits toward graduation even though she never took a LAM course at the College.[2] This student was not included in the study. Thus, 29 students (28+1) actually earned the LAM degree from the College over the entire study period (See Table 2).

Findings: Graduates by Those Who Took First LAM from Spring 1991 to Winter 1994

Of the 116 students who took at least one LAM course at Gainesville College from the spring of 1991 to the winter of 1994 (at least eight quarters to complete the LAM courses and general education requirements), 28 (28/116 or 24.1%) had received an A.A.S. in LAM as of the fall of 1995 (Table 4). The A.A.S. degree requires all the LAM course credits plus 60 hours of general education (see GC Catalog, 1995-97). Part III data indicates that a better indicator of student progress through the LAM-series might be the number of completers.

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[2]Currently, students who successfully pass the Certified Legal Assistant (CLA) examination are awarded 28 quarter credit hours toward graduation for the Legal Assistant Management courses (excluding LAM 206).

PART III

COMPLETION OF LAM SERIES

Cohort

Students who took at least one LAM course at Gainesville College with a 'D' or better were followed from the quarter in which they enrolled in their first LAM course through to the fall of 1995. Of the 178 students in the database with credit for a LAM offering, 3 never took a LAM course at Gainesville College and 21 never passed at least one LAM course with a 'D' or better (i.e. they received grades of 'W', 'F', or 'WF'). Hence, the final cohort for Part III of this study is 154 students (Table 5). Only LAM courses with grades of 'D' or better were tallied. Three of the 154 students who met this criterion earned several LAM credits from other colleges and transferred them to the College or earned credits by examination (these courses were included in the matrix).

Rationale for Part III Study

Students who start the LAM sequence and who pass at least one LAM course can be considered LAM majors who are capable of progressing with the series of courses (n=154). Problems associated with this assumption were discussed earlier. The course-taking behavior of these students gives an indication of retention and student interest that is highly specific to the LAM program.

Findings: LAM-Completers from Spring 1991 to Winter 1994

Fifty of the 105 (48%) students who took at least one LAM course at Gainesville College and passed it with a 'D' or better between the spring of 1991 and the winter of 1994 went on to complete the series of LAM courses with a 'D' or better by the fall of 1995. Twenty-eight of the 50 (56%) students described above earned an Associate of Applied Science in LAM from the College by the fall of 1995. It is highly likely that at least some, if not all, of the 22 series-completers without LAM degrees are finishing the 60 hours of general education credits

necessary for the A.A.S. An additional 5 students completed 8 or 9 LAM courses. One can speculate that they and other non-completers will eventually complete the series.

Twenty-five of the 105 students (16%) who started the series at the College between the spring of 1991 and the winter of 1994 dropped out of the LAM series by the fall of 1995 after passing only one or two courses with a 'D' or better. If one excludes them from consideration, then the number of completers who are interested in the program, capable of continuing for at least three quarters, and completing the LAM sequence within at least eight quarters increases to 65 percent (80/50).

Equally encouraging is the data from the 19 students in this study who took at least one LAM course during the spring of 1995. By the fall of 1995, 10 of them (53%) had completed at least five of the LAM courses at the College.[3] Judging from the progress of students who started during earlier quarters, this is an indication of their interest in completing the LAM series. The data clearly suggest that the majority of students who commit to the program progress towards the associate degree.

[3]One student passed 5 LAM courses at Gainesville College and transferred a sixth to the College from another institution.

Tables 1 and 2. Retention Patterns (1) and Associate Degrees Earned at Gainesville College (2)
Spring of 1991 to the Fall of 1995

OPIR, Dr. Hamilton, February 1996

Notes There were 175 students (sum of first diagonal) in the database who enrolled in their first LAM course at Gainesville College from the spring of 1991 to the fall of 1995. A basic assumption of the study is that a student who enrolls in one LAM course is a LAM major who intends to complete the sequence. No attempt was made to exclude students who were not self-declared LAM majors. Students at the beginning of a row are those who enrolled in their first LAM course at GC during the row quarter. Those students are then followed down the row to determine their enrollment persistence. The number of students within a row who earned an associate of applied science degree in LAM at Gainesville College are shown parenthetically by the quarter in which the degree was awarded. Enrollments of the total cohort by quarter are given in the matrix below the persistence table along wth a tally of associate degrees earned at GC. There were 29 LAM degrees awarded over the study period. One of the 28 (who was not included in the study) was given 25 hours of transfer LAM credit for passing the CLA exam. The 28 LAM degrees awarded to the study cohort are shown by the number earned by year and quarter (dyq) and the number earned by the starting group (syq). Both rows of LAM degrees total to 28. Some students earned associate degrees at GC other then LAM degrees (these are noted as well).

Table 1 **Retention as of First LAM Course at Gainesville College**

FLC	Sp 91	Su 91	F 91	W 92	Sp 92	Su 92	F 92	W 93	Sp 93	Su 93	F 93	W 94	Sp 94	Su 94	F 94	W 95	Sp 95	Su 95	F 95	
Sp 91	31	19	19	16	12	13	6	7 (1)	5 (1)	4	5 (1)	4	1	2	2 (1)	1	2 (1)	1		Sp 91
Su 91		3	2	2	2	2	1	2	2 (1)							1	1 (1)			Su 91
F 91			12	12	9	8	7	4	7	6 (2)	3 (2)	2	1		1		1	2		F 91
W 92				8	6	6	4	4	4	4	3 (1)	2 (1)	1		1	1				W 92
Sp 92					10	7	5	3	1	2	1	2	1	1	3	2	2		2	Sp 92
Su 92						2	2	1	1											Su 92
F 92							0													F 92
W 93								0												W 93
Sp 93									27	25	24	23	21	19 (5)	11 (2)	10	7 (1)	5	7 (3)	Sp 93
Su 93										4	3	1	1	2	1	1	1 (1)			Su 93
F 93											12	9	9	6	7	5	6	7	2 (1)	F 93
W 94												7	6	3	4	4	4	3	3 (2)	W 94
Sp 94													12	9	6	5	4	4	4	Sp 94
Su 94														4	2		1	1		Su 94
F 94															0					F 94
W 95																0				W 95
Sp 95																	21	14	15	Sp 95
Su 95																		8	4	Su 95
F 95																			14	F 95
	Sp 91	Su 91	F 91	W 92	Sp 92	Su 92	F 92	W 93	Sp 93	Su 93	F 93	W 94	Sp 94	Su 94	F 94	W 95	Sp 95	Su 95	F 95	
Enroll	31	22	33	38	39	38	25	21	47	45	51	50	53	46	38	30	50	45	51	Enroll

Table 2. Associate Degrees EArned at Gainesville College

Degree																				Degr
LAM																				LAM
dyq	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	4 (1*)	1	0	5	3	0	4	0	6	dyyq
syq	5	2	4	2	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	syyq
Other	2	0	3	0	2	1	0	0	3	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	2	Other

Legend FLC-Year and Quarter of First LAM course; Enroll - Total students in LAM program who took first LAM at GC
Degree - Associate Degree at GC: LA M- Legal Assistant Management; Other: not a LAM degree (syq determination)
syq - Start Year and Quarter = number of students in starting year who earned an associate degree regardless of quarter earned (n=28)
dyq - Degree Year and Quarter = number of students who earned the associate degree in the designated year and quarter (n=28+1)

*A student who transferred all LAM courses to GC

Table 3: One-Year Retention Rates: Spring 1991-Sp92 to Summer 1994-Su95
Table 4. LAM Graduates as of Fall 1995
Legal Assistant Management Program
Dr. Hamilton, OPIR, February 1996

1-Yr Retention Rate: $\frac{\textit{Enrolled Fourth Quarter After First LAM}}{\textit{Total Enrolled First LAM Quarter}} \times 100$

Table 3
One-Year LAM Retention Rates

Start Qtr	Sp 91	Su 91	F 91	W 92	Sp 92	Su 92	F92	W93	Sp 93	Su 93	F 93	W 94	Sp 94	Su 94	Total
n	31	3	12	8	10	2	0	0	27	4	12	7	12	4	132
End Qtr	Sp 92	Su 92	Sp 93	Su 93	F 93	W 94	F93	W94	Sp 94	Su 94	F 94	W 95	Sp 95	Su 95	Total
n	12	2	7	4	1	0			21	2	7	4	4	1	65
1-Yr Rate	38.7	66.7	58.3	50.0	10.0	0.0			77.8	50.0	58.3	57.1	33.3	25.0	49.2

*meaningful rates should be based on at least ten students

Table 4
LAM Graduates as of Fall 1995 (Variable length of time between student groups)

	N
Enrolled Spr 91 to Wtr 94	116
Graduated by Fall 95	28
Rate	24.1

Student who received 25 hours of transfer LAM credits for passing CLA exam not included. She never took a LAM course at GC.

All students enrolled in their first LAM course between Spring 1991 and Winter 1994 and had eight quarters or more to earn an associate degree in LAM.

Students were followed for a variable length of time: Spring 1991 to Fall 1995 (19 quarters) as compared to Winter 1994 to Fall 1995 (8 quarters)

One-Year System-wide Retention Rates

System-wide retention rates represent the percentages of respective pools of fall quarter, first-time, full-time entering students who are re-enrolled or transferred within the University System in the following fall quarter.

Fall to Fall	GC	2Y
1989-1990	71.8	66.0
1990-1991	68.7	65.0
1991-1992	75.4	66.4
1992-1993	72.4	65.4
1993-1994	78.0	63.6

Three-year Graduation Rate: First-time, Full-time Students

	GC	2Y
Fall 1990 to Spring 1993	20.3	
Fall 1991 to Spring 1994	20.6	14.5

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Table 5. Number of LAM Courses Taken as of Quarter of First GC LAM Course

Gainesville College

OPIR, Dr. Hamilton, February 1996

Conclusions

1 50 out of 105 (48%) students who took at least one LAM course at GC and passed it and subsequent LAM courses with a 'D' or better between the spring of 1991 and the winter of 1994 went on to complete the series of LAM courses by the fall of 1995. Twenty eight of the 50 earned an Associate of Applied Science in LAM from GC by the fall of 1995. It is likely that at least some, if not all, of the 22 series- completers without degrees are taking the 60 hours of general education credits necessary for their AAS in LAM.

2 Another 5 students from the above group have 8 or 9 LAM courses completed (55/105 = 52%). It is likely that at least some non-completers still intend to finish the sequence.

3 25 of the 105 (16%) students who started the LAM series between Sp91 and W95 dropped out of the program by the fall of 1995 after passing only 2 courses with a 'D' or better.

Note The LAM sequence consists of 11 courses (12 as of the summer of 1994) that take approximately eight quarters to complete. Students who started their first LAM at GC from the spring of 1991 through to the winter of 1994 had at least eight quarters to complete the sequence. One or two LAM courses are offered per quarter. For example, the number of LAM courses offered in the spring of 1995 to winter of 1996 series are as follows: Sp95-2 courses, Su95-2, F95-1, W94-2, Sp96-1, Su96-1, F96-1, W96-2. As of the summer of 1994, students must take an additional LAM course (total of 12) that is offered for the first time during the summer of 1996.

Cohort Students who took at least one LAM course at GC with a 'D' or better were followed from the quarter of their first LAM course at GC through to the fall of 1995. Only LAM courses with a grade of 'D' or better were counted. Three of the 154 students in the study earned several LAM credits through transfer from another institution or by exam.

Total N	**178**	**LAM Course on Transcript**
	-3	Never took a LAM at GC
	-21	Never passed a LAM at GC with >=D
Subtotal	**154**	*Number of students entered into matrix*

Qtr of 1st LAM	Number of LAM Courses 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total
Sp 91	1	6	1	2	3				2		11	**26**
Su 91		1				1					2	**3**
F 91	1	1				1			1		6	**10**
W 92		2		1	1						3	**7**
Sp 92	2	2	3	2							1	**10**
Su 92	1	1										**2**
F 92												**0**
W 93												**0**
Sp 93		2	3	1	1			1			18	**26**
Su 93	1		1		1						1	**4**
F 93	2		3								6	**11**
W 94	2			1					1		2	**6**
Sp 94	1		1	3				1	3			**9**
Su 94	2	1										**3**
F 94												**0**
W 95												**0**
Sp 95*	6	2	1		9	1						**19**
Su 95	2	1	4									**7**
F 95	11											**11**
Total	**32**	**19**	**17**	**10**	**15**	**2**	**0**	**2**	**7**	**0**	**50**	**154**

Sp91-W94	11 LAM
105	50

*Students could enroll in up to five LAM courses between the spring of 1995 and the fall of 1995.

One student transferred a LAM course to GC thus had six courses completed

LAM Enrollments for 1993, 1994, and 1995 by Race and Gender
Gainesville College

OPIR, Dr. Hamilton, February 1996

Cohort: One hundred and nine students who enrolled in their first LAM course at Gainesville College during the 1993, 1994, or 1995 calendar year.

Legal Assistant Management			Race						Sex			
			Amer Ind		White		Mixed		Male		Female	
Calendar Year	GC Equivalent	N	n	%N	n	%N	n	%N	n	%N	n	%N
1993	Wtr 93 to Fall 93	*43*	1	2.3	42	97.7	0	0.0	4	9.3	39	90.7
1994	Wtr 94 to Fall 94	*23*	0	0.0	23	100.0	0	0.0	2	8.7	21	91.3
1995	Wtr 95 to Fall 95	*43*	0	0.0	42	97.7	1	2.3	6	14.0	37	86.0
1993 to 1995	Wtr 93 to Fall 95	*109*	1	0.9	107	98.2	1	0.9	12	11.0	97	89.0

Amer Ind - American Indian or Alaskan Native

Gainesville College		Race										Sex			
		Black		White		Mixed		Amer Ind		Other		Male		Female	
Fall Quarters	N	n	%N	n	%N	n	%N	n	%N	n	%N	n	%N	n	%N
1993	*2632*	95	3.6	2466	93.7	NA	0.0	18	0.7	53	2.0	1078	41.0	1554	59.0
1994	*2642*	93	3.5	2477	93.8	NA	0.0	10	0.4	62	2.3	1094	41.4	1548	58.6
1995	*2646*	100	3.8	2458	92.9	5	0.2	8	0.3	75	2.8	1088	41.1	1558	58.9
1993 to 1995	7920	288	3.6	7401	93.4	5	0.1	36	0.5	190	2.4	3260	41.2	4660	58.8

Other includes Asian or Pacific Islander and Hispanic

interoffice
MEMORANDUM

to: Joan Marler
from: Dr. John M. Hamilton
subject: LAM Graduate Survey
date: May 1, 1996
cc: Drs. Watkins and Fuller

Enclosed is a summary analysis of the Legal Assistant Program Graduate Survey administered during the spring of 1996. Comments to open-ended questions are included. Eleven of 29 graduates responded (38% response rate).

Legal Assistant Program
Graduate Survey - Spring 1996
Dr. Hamilton, OPIR

	n	%N	N	
1 Age				
18-22	1	9.1		
23-27	3	27.3		
28-32	4	36.4		
32 or >	3	27.3	11	
2 Sex				
Male	2	18.2		
Female	9	81.8	11	
3 Continue education after GC				
Yes	3	30.0		
No	7	70.0	10	
4 If continued education, what type institution attend				
Four-year	3	100.0		
Graduate		0.0		
Law		0.0		
Other		0.0	3	
5 List all degrees				
Associate	9	100.0		
Bachelor		0.0		
Master		0.0		
Doctorate		0.0	9	
6 Taken the NALA-CLA Exam				
Yes	2	18.2		
No	9	81.8	11	
7 If yes above, did you pass?				
Yes		0.0		(1 - Do not know yet)
No	1	100.0	1	
8 If no above, do you plan to take the CLA exam?				
Yes	7	77.8		(1 - Not sure response)
No	2	22.2	9	
9 Are you currently a certified paralegal?				
Yes		0.0		
No	11	100.0	11	

10 Date of graduation from GC							
Winter	1	1993	3	Spring 1993	Summer 94	Fall 95
Spring	3	1994	2	Summer 93	Winter 95	Spring 96
Summer	5	1995	4	Summer 93	Spring 95	Summer 96
Fall	1	1996	2	1994	Summer 95	

11 Employment status			
Private law office	5	45.5	
Law-related gov't office	1	9.1	
Business, but not law	5	45.5	
Unemployed, seeking		0.0	
Unemployed, not seeking		0.0	11
12 If employed, job description			
Paralegal or Legal Ass't	5	45.5	
Legal Secretary	1	9.1	
Office Manager		0.0	
Other	5	45.5	11

13 Open-ended question: Primary job responsibilities

14 If employed, how find first job after GC			
College placement office		0.0	
Faculty at GC		0.0	
Friends or acquaintances	1	9.1	
Newspaper or magazine ad	1	9.1	
Worked there before	6	54.5	
Employment agency		0.0	
Word of mouth		0.0	
Other	3	27.3	11
15 If worked for present employer before GC, did LAM program upgrade or improve position			
Yes	3	37.5	
Not yet, but probably will	3	37.5	
No	2	25.0	8
16 If employed in non-legal position, did LAM bring promotion or increase in responsibilities			
Yes	1	25.0	
No	3	75.0	4
17 If employed, how many hours work?			
Less than 20		0.0	
20-30	2	18.2	
31-40	3	27.3	
41-50	5	45.5	
More than 50	1	9.1	11
18 If employed, hours spent with computer			
1-5	2	18.2	
6-10	1	9.1	
11-15	2	18.2	
Over 15	6	54.5	11
19 If employed in legal area, what areas of law (select all that apply)			
Litigation/personal injury	4	20.0	
Corporate/business	3	15.0	
Real estate		0.0	
Wills/probate	4	20.0	
Administrative law	1	5.0	
Bankruptcy	1	5.0	
Family law	3	15.0	
Other	4	20.0	20
20 If employed, indicate benefits (select all that apply)			
Health insurance	6	28.6	
Life insurance	4	19.0	
Retirement/pension	6	28.6	
Dental insurance	2	9.5	
Other	3	14.3	21
21 If employed, number of jobs since GC			
1	10	90.9	
2	1	9.1	
3		0.0	
4		0.0	
5 or more		0.0	11
22 If employed part-time, what is hourly rate of pay?			
Less than $5		0.0	
Between $5-$7		0.0	
Between $8-$10	1	25.0	
Between $11-$15	3	75.0	
Over $16		0.0	4

23 If employed full-time, what is annual salary?

Under $10,000	1	11.1	
$10,000-$14,999	2	22.2	
$15,000-$19,999	2	22.2	
$20,000-$24,999	3	33.3	
$25,000-$29,999	1	11.1	
$30,000-$34,999		0.0	
Over $35,000		0.0	9

24 If employed, how satisfied with job

Very Satisfied	4	36.4	
Satisfied	4	36.4	
Neutral	3	27.3	
Dissatisfied		0.0	
Very dissatisfied		0.0	11

25 If employed, where is job in relation to GC

Within a 50 mile radius	10	90.9	
Within a 100 mile radius	1	9.1	
Over 100 miles away		0.0	11

26 Open-ended question: Employer's name and address

27 Open-ended question: Most helpful LAM courses

28 Open-ended question: Least helpful LAM courses

29 Did completion of LAM program help get job or continue in a currently held job?

Yes	7	63.6	
No	3	27.3	
Other	1	9.1	11

30 Was LAM program experience useful in your job?

Yes	8	72.7	
No	3	27.3	11

31 Did completing LAM program improve job performance?

Yes	9	81.8	
No	1	9.1	
Other	1	9.1	11

32 Initial reason for enrolling in LAM (select all that apply)

Help current employment	3	20.0	
Seemed like a good idea		0.0	
Friend or relative talked me into it		0.0	
Recommended by one in program	2	13.3	
Wanted a job as paralegal	6	40.0	
Boss said he/she pay for it	2	13.3	
Other	2	13.3	15

33 Was LAM program what you expected

Yes	6	54.5	
No	1	9.1	
Didn't know what to expect	4	36.4	11

34 Did instructors use current and useful textbooks/materials

Almost always	4	36.4	
Majority of time	6	54.5	
Occasionally	1	9.1	
Seldom		0.0	
No opinion		0.0	11

35 Did instructors convey course content and objectives

Almost always	4	36.4	
Majority of time	6	54.5	
Occasionally		0.0	
Seldom	1	9.1	
No opinion		0.0	11

36	Prefer for LAM instructors			
	Local practicing attorneys	8	61.5	(Several students had two respon
	Faculty w/law degree	2	15.4	
	Paralegals	3	23.1	
	Other		0.0	13
37	Rating of LAM instructors overall			
	Very good	4	36.4	
	Good	5	45.5	
	Adequate	2	18.2	
	Poor		0.0	
	Very poor		0.0	11

Open-Ended Question
Legal Assistant Management Program
Graduate Survey - Spring 1996
Gainesville College

Dr. Hamilton, OPIR

4. If continued education, what type of institution did you attend?

- North Georgia College - Business Administration
- University of Georgia - Criminal Justice
- Shorter College - Business Management

12. If employed, what is your present job title or description?

- Other: Bookkeeper, administrative assistant, own paralegal service doing courthouse research, sales/student, executive assistant, bookkeeper, self-employed (wallpaper and ceramic tile installation)

13. If employed, what are your primary job responsibilities?

- All office duties, typing, filing, answering phone, scheduling flights, hotel accommodations, and care rentals
- Legal assistant to managing attorney in 5-attorney firm; Office manager in charge of 4 legal secretaries; trial preparation, deposition preparation, meet with clients, typing correspondence, pleadings, discovery, briefs; all administrative duties in the office.
- Dictation, scheduling, research activities
- Criminal and civil background checks
- Support sales staff, director of sales and marketing
- Accounts payable and receivable, payroll, filing, banking, design
- Organization of all cases
- Legal assistant and bookkeeper, worker's comp, social security, probate and estate
- Drafting pleadings, discovery, etc., typing, dictation
- I own my company. We hang wallpaper and lay ceramic tile. I handle all correspondence and phone calls and do estimates and much of the actual labor.

19. Employers Name and Address

- Cantrell Machine Company, P.O. Box 757, Gainesville 30503 (Poultry processing equipment)
- Joyce Merck Florist, 302-B Broad St., Gainesville 30501, 770-534-6691 (flowers)
- Rodder E. Davison, P.O. Box 118, Royston, GA 30662, 706-245-7211 (attorney)
- Sartain Law Offices, 219 Boulevard NE, Gainesville 30501, 770-532-9575 (Law firm)
- Harbin and Hartley Law Firm, P.O. Box 2975, Gainesville 30503, 770-534-7341 (attorneys)

- Turek Paralegal Services, P.O. Box 1575, Gainesville 30503, 770-535-7949 (Court house record search)
- Friedman's Jeweler, Lakeland Plaza, Chumming, GA 30130, 770-781-4006 (Jewelry)
- Smith, Gilliam, and Williams, P.A., 301 Green Street NW, Suite 200, Old Coca-Cola Bldg, P.O. Box 1098, Gainesville 30503, 770-536-3381 (legal)
- Berlon and Timmel, 3150 Holcomb Bridge Road, Suite 300, Norcross, GA 30771, 770-662-8784 (in-house counsel for Cincinnati Insurance Company)
- OHM Corporation, 5335 Triangle Parkway, Norcross, GA 30092, 770-849-3000 (remediation services)
- Deborah Molnar, 2934 Old Thompson Mill Road, Buford, GA 30518, 404-945-3958

27. What LAM course(s) do you feel were the most helpful and why?

- Family law, corporations, and contracts: fit my interest and apply more to the business I am in
- Civil procedures and civil litigation: This is the area of law that my firm practices
- Legal Research: Learned how to find and update law; Wills, Probate and Estates gave me a better understanding of planning; Bankruptcy gave me a better understanding of the area my boss practices heavily.
- Legal Research and criminal litigation were very interesting
- Legal Research prepared me for my job researching records.
- Civil Litigation: The forms in this class are more closely related to what we deal with on a daily basis; Legal Research
- They were all helpful. I mostly use things learned in 102, 103, and 106
- Family Law: my main area of concentration; Wills, Probates, and Estates - I do a lot of this too
- I would say I learned the most in Will, Probate, and Estates, but that also interested me. I understood what the instructor was saying. He did not talk over my head.
- Legal Research and Contracts: They give you the basics to be a paralegal.
- I liked real estate closings. I am an agent and I think it helps people to know more about what happens in a closing. If you ever own a house, you will have to be a part of at least one.

28. What LAM course(s) were the least helpful and why?

- I do not feel that computers is a necessary class
- None really. I feel that all the classes currently offered by GC are important, even if a student may feel otherwise at the time. Each course represents a part of the big picture. Each is important for a well-rounded career and thorough LAM program.
- Civil Litigation was not extensive, seemed to mostly project oriented rather than learning applicable law
- Contracts: Instructor had difficulties
- Real Estate title Examination: The teacher I had did not explain things very well.
- Real Estate (both parts) because the teachers did not teach the material. They just expected us to know it.

- I hated title examination. We had a bad teacher and after working all day, no one feels like standing up for four hours in the basement of the courthouse.

38. List any specific problems that you encountered with the LAM program or its instructors.

- Some of the instructors were not well-prepared and overall those instructors were very confusing to me. I felt as if I did not learn well with those instructors. Otherwise, I feel the LAM program did a lot to enhance my career.
- Some instructors were good and some were terrible. The program itself needs improvement in the fact that it does not give you enough hands-on experience.
- The only problem I remember was a teacher that spent 30 minutes a night talking about the survey we would fill out at the end of the quarter.

39. List any specific highlights or good experiences that you had in the LAM program.

- I learned about the many areas of law and gained an overall basic knowledge of each field.
- I feel all the instructors were great. Being practicing attorneys, they could all share personal experiences and assist us in the learning process.
- The Legal Research class was well taught by Bucky Highsmith. He was very knowledgeable and a fantastic instructor.
- I really enjoyed Bucky Highsmith's class. He's a great teacher.
- In the Will's class we prepared a will which has helped me in my job.
- I did learn a lot about things in the legal world that I believe will be of benefit to me.

40. Is there a course that would be of general benefit that you feel we should add to our program and why?

- Worker's compensation
- I think there should be some type of internship program. It would give hands-on experience.
- Preparatory class for CLA exam.
- General office practice including but not limited to contact with clients and preparation of documents.

41. Please give some suggestions or recommendations that you have which could improve the LAM program.

- Internship program. Some classes need to be longer to cover the material more thoroughly.
- The Legal Environment in Business is not transferrable. Business law course needs to be added to program since some 4-year schools require it.
- It might be good if you show other examples of forms used in different law firms. It might be beneficial if you explain other areas of the law. For example, it would be good to explain how the different laws affect teachers compared to how they affect workers in a factory. Topics such as the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Fair Dismissal Act would be good to discuss in the Civil Litigation Class.

42. Any other comments.

- I am glad to have been a part of this program and am very happy to have graduated. I contacted the college placement office after graduation and received no help from them whatsoever and was very disappointed.
- I thoroughly enjoyed the program. It was a great experience.